

Chosen by God Part 2

Exposition of Ephesians

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Bible Text: Ephesians 1:4-6
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Thinking about this day and Father's Day, what it means and the Apostle Paul, actually, in chapter 3, we're going to read chapter, we're preaching from chapter 1, but just in relation to Father's Day, he says in chapter 3, verse 14, he prays for the Ephesian church, saying, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name." One of the things he's stating there is that the family is based on the paradigm of the family of the Trinity, that the Father, the Son, the relationship they have, Holy Spirit, that the communion of love, that the earthly family is a picture of that, and that God relates to us as Father. What a high calling that means it is to be then a father in this world, and so grateful for the men that God has placed in this church that have been blessed to have children. And so we do have the gift, as we talked about afterwards, for you to pick up. So grateful for my dad and his faithfulness to Christ, the example that he set before me all these years. And we want to just take a minute to ask those fathers that are here to stand, if you just stand. If you're a father, if you're an expectant father for the first time, you're a father, so stand with us. Amen. Wow, what a blessing. Maybe give them a little appreciation. [applause] Guys, you can be seated. And the gift that we have for you afterwards is, I love, there's a measuring tape. Don't you always need a measuring tape? I needed a measuring tape yesterday, like this weekend, like two different times and didn't have one with me. I do have them, but just didn't have them with me. This is a small one that makes it even easier to carry. And then it's a Coke with peanuts. The old fashioned way of putting peanuts in the Coke is the idea. So try that this week. You want to chill that Coke a little bit before you drink it with the peanuts, but then, Anyway, it's a guy thing, right? So that's what the Father's Day stuff is. Girls get flowers, we get peanuts and a Coke. Yeah, and we're happy to have it, that's right, amen. What would we do with a flower, you know? We would give it to our wife, that's what we would do. But anyway.

So we're returning to the first chapter of Ephesians and to our exposition of this wonderful book and we come to, as we've seen this, that Paul opens his letter after he does his initial salutation, his greeting at the beginning of the letter in verses 1 and 2, he launches into an extended doxology, that is a word of praise, that is actually actively worshiping God the Father from verses 3 to 14. He's just sharing with them encouragement, and as he does, he can't help but worship. And so we see that throughout the Scriptures, there are places where the apostles will be talking and presenting doctrine,

and then they will suddenly interject worship and that's what he does in verse 3, "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and it's extended doxology all the way through verse 14. And as he is encouraging them to get caught up in his worship of God, he's saying, "Listen, I want you to understand who God is and all that He's done for you," and what really seizes his heart to this extended worship is he is reflecting on the great blessings that God has blessed every believer with in Christ and he's so moved by that as he reflects on this and he enumerates five different blessings between verses 3 and 14. Five great blessings. And the first one we began to look at last week, the first blessing that he enumerates and elaborates on and celebrates is that we are chosen by God. If you're in Christ, you have been chosen by God. That's the title of the message last Sunday and this Sunday as well. So this is "Chosen by God Part 2." We began looking at this blessing last Sunday and would encourage you, if you missed that, to view that message online or to download it sometime this week from our website.

So "Chosen by God," that's the title of the message and we're going to read verses 3 to 14 so you catch a sense of this worship. Paul is going to speak to the praise of his glory three different times in this as he is continuing to worship God for all the great things that God has done, and so we're going to focus on verses 4 to 6, but let's read all of this passage. Verse 3,

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Let's pray together.

Father, as we come again this morning, we come with hearts that are needy, we come, Lord, asking that You might bless us. We know that we're so grateful for these promises that we are blessed. We pray that we might experience that even this morning, the

wonder of Your grace, illuminating our hearts and minds to understand. Open our eyes that we can see the wonder of all that You've done for us in Christ. And for those that are here today that have not come to personally know You, in a living way of being born again, may today be the day of salvation. But in everything, may Jesus Christ be praised. We pray in His name. Amen.

So, chosen by God. These glorious blessings Paul begins to unpack, he begins here with this first blessing. He's going to talk about our great redemption. He's going to talk about the wonder of the fact that we understand the purposes of God, that we have an inheritance that's an eternal inheritance in heaven. He's going to talk about the fact we've been given the Holy Spirit. But the first blessing he leads off this celebration with as he begins to worship the Lord is the blessing of God's eternal election of every believer. He starts here and he doesn't bring up this subject, which is a controversial subject, election, predestination, he doesn't bring it up with an extended logical argument for why we should accept it. We might wish he did. you're wrestling with this doctrine. You probably do wish he had. "Paul, why are you throwing something that heavy out here and not supporting it and helping me understand it?" But he just simply states it plainly. He doesn't merely just state it plainly though, he actually glories in it. He states it in a celebratory fashion. He wants us to be caught up in worship and so we talked about this last week in introducing this subject, that though it is complex, and I hope to speak a little more about the why of it next Sunday, Lord willing, which will unpack some of these things, but I wanted to start off where he starts off, not asking the questions and logically arguing with it, but simply letting the wonder of it wash over your soul and be blessed in it so that you worship God. That's the force of the text.

So he, I shared last week, I think the text encourages us to come with a humble, teachable mindset. We always should approach God's word humbly with a teachability that says, "Lord, I want to learn from You. You teach me." But also a worshipful mindset, a devotional approach that says, when we come to the Scriptures, the one thing we want to know is we want to know who God is so that we can worship him more correctly, more truly, and he is showing us in this passage the wonder of who he is, his sovereignty in salvation, his sovereign grace, so that we might glory in it and glory in him. So remember that as we look at this, to not argue with the text, but to submit to it and we'll talk about some of the ways the other passages in Scripture help us understand the basis of election. Is election truly unconditional or is it conditioned? We'll talk about that, Lord willing, next Sunday.

So, we began this discussion last week, and looking at the passage, and I said that we would try to outline the text around the five W's and an H, those five W's, who, what, when, where, why, and how. Okay, I got all five, yeah. And we went through two last week, what and when. We looked at what, what is the text saying? What is election? I mean, what is the reality he's talking about, his choosing of us. That was the point we looked at last time, that God chose us. What happened? God chose us to be his own. That's what the text says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as He chose us in Him." He chose us rather than we chose him. Yes, you chose him. In your experience, if

you're a Christian, at some point in time, you came to believe the gospel, and there's a sense in which you chose him but what he's saying here is the determining factor in our choosing of him was his previous choosing of us. He chose us.

So that was the what, and then the when we looked at, which he says, "before the foundation of the world." This choosing, this election happened before the foundation of the world, that before God had created anything, he had determined to save his people out of the mass of sinful humanity, he had chosen those for himself that would be his for all eternity. Jesus Christ slain from the foundation of the world. So we looked at what and when last week, and this morning we want to look at another W and an H, the only H. So we want to look at where and how. Where and how.

So where. There's an emphasis on place or location in the text. It's following kind of a key theme of Paul in the book. He is concerned about where quite often, that he speaks of the believer being in Christ, which we looked at previously, a few weeks back. We're in Christ. If you come to be saved, you are born again, what happens is you are united to Christ so that God sees you as in Christ. Location-wise, there's been a change of realm. You've gone from being in Adam to being in Christ. We see an emphasis in the book that those who are in Christ are seated with him in the heavenly places and we saw that Paul uses that phrase five different times. So location, spiritual location, is an important principle in this letter and we see it here in some beautiful ways as well in these verses, verses 4 to 6, about his electing of his people, and I think we see it in two key phrases I want us to look at, or two key concepts, this idea of where. So point number one's going to have two sub-points and the first sub-point is the key phrase "before Him. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we would be holy and blameless before Him," there at the end of verse 4, "that we would be before Him holy and blameless." And the idea is on where we are, that we would be able, God shows us out of the mass of humanity that hated him, was running from him, he chose us to come before him. In fact, it's a very strong phrase. It's a preposition, but it's a compound preposition, actually. A couple different prepositions joined together. But it comes from a word which means literally "in the sight of." Enopion is the word here. Enopion, enop in Greek is ophthalmology, optometrist. O-P is the word for eye. It literally means in the sight of and this particular preposition, enopion, has an intensifying preposition before it, kata enopion, which intensifies the meaning. So in the sight of, it means in the very sight of, that he chose us in him that we would be holy and blameless in the very sight of God. In the very presence of. It's emphasizing that with great intensity.

In this phrase, "in the sight of God," this particular preposition is only used three times. That's enopion plus kata on the front is only three times in the New Testament. Here, Ephesians 1:4, Colossians 1:22, and Jude, verse 24, which I'm going to show you in a moment, those three places. But, like I said, it's an intensifying of this other preposition, enopion. The prefix intensifies the basic meaning and enopion means "in the sight of." In the eye, remember. Enopion, that preposition, enopion, is used 97 times in the New Testament and it's one which has strong connotations, strong connotative baggage that comes along with it, and meaning that comes with it, and that is the idea of the judging, discerning, scrutiny of the living God. To be enopion, as it's used in the New Testament,

predominantly means to be under the judging eye of God, to stand before God in his sight as he looks at you with his searching, perfect knowledge, and sees everything about you. That's the force of this phrase. I'll show you how Paul uses it a few places. This is, again, not the intensified form we have in Ephesians 1, but the normal form. 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, there's some examples of this, what it means, God's judging view. So he's saying that we're going to be able to stand before the judgment seat of God, holy and blameless in love.

Let me show you the force of this. 1 Timothy 5, verse 21. Paul says, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality." "I solemnly charge you, in the presence of God," translates *enopion*, that's normally how it's translated, "in the presence of God." "I charge you solemnly," and he's saying, listen, he's talking about how elders are to be dealt with when there's charges against them, and how you're to maintain these principles without partiality. He says, "I solemnly charge you, do this without partiality," speaking to the other elders, "do this as if you are under the scrutiny of the living Almighty God as you do it. I solemnly charge you."

He uses the same phrase in chapter 6 and verse 13, "I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach." When Paul says, "in the presence of God," it's the same word *enopion*. "Listen, Timothy, I'm telling you, make sure you keep this commandment and I'm reminding you as I tell you that you are in the presence of God, God is watching you."

2 Timothy 2:14. Paul says to Timothy now as the pastor, "Remind others of this same thing, those who are finding themselves caught up in controversies that are unprofitable." 2:14, 2 Timothy 2, "Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers." Charge them in the presence of God.

In chapter 4, verse 1, his parting words, this is Paul's last his last letter, in a sense his last will and testament, he's about to depart this world, he's about to be martyred, and he says to Timothy, 2 Timothy 4:1, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." See the powerful impetus that he's giving to Timothy to be faithfully discharged his ministry. He reminds him, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead."

So this phrase, *enopion*, has that overwhelming emphasis in the New Testament so when he says where, he's talking about in the presence of God who sees all things. In fact, one other place, if you turn to 2 Timothy, just turn over past Titus and Philemon to chapter 4 of Hebrews, one other place I want to show you this. Right after a very familiar, we'll read verse 12, it's verse 13, but I want you to read verse 12 as well. A familiar verse, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing

as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." I love that passage. What a powerful passage. The word of God, he says, is able to discern your heart and my heart and it cuts in such fine ways that it divides like a surgeon dividing joint and marrow. The word of God discerns thoughts and intentions of the heart. The word of God helps us understand why we do what we do. We don't know why we do what we do, but the word of God can show us why. But the next verse, verse 13, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight," same phrase, enopion, "there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." One day every human being is going to stand before God and we stand before God, and the reality is, it's just like this right now, but one day we will know it in our experience, and when we stand before him, he sees everything. There's no way to fool him in any way. He knows every secret motive of our hearts, they're all laid bare.

This phrase that Paul is using in Ephesians 1:4 when he says, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless before Him," he's saying he chose us so that we could stand before God who sees everything, knows every sinful motivation, even the time, we can fool other people, we cannot fool him. He sees everything. He's saying he chose you so that one day you would stand before him. In his scrutiny, he would see as he looks at you, holiness, blamelessness. Perfect holiness and perfect blamelessness. This is what he purposed to do when he chose you in Christ, that in his sight who sees all things, he would see no blemish outwardly and no defect inwardly. Perfection.

I think it's wonderful how he uses these two phrases, holy and blameless. He recalls a lot of the Old Testament imagery around the temple. The offerings were to be holy and blameless. The priests who came into the presence of God were to be holy and blameless. But holy and blameless are two sides. I think holy emphasizes the internal and blameless more the external. To be holy, the word holy from the Old Testament, and this meaning is imported into the New, means to be set apart, to be separated. It means to be removed from the sphere of the common and separated unto the sphere of the sacred, to be set apart for God. And it pictures total and complete devotion and here the idea is total and complete separation from everything else to God. This pictures hearts that are completely and fully surrendered to God. This is what we should be. But this is not what we are in our experience, is it?

Blameless is a word which means unblemished and it focuses more on the external. You know, a lamb to be offered or a goat to be offered had to be without spot or without blemish. It had to be as God made it to be as he created things, not tainted by sin, not tainted by the effects of sin. And so the idea is, where God intended to bring us into his very presence, into the very sight of God, right before his face, holy and blameless. That's what he predestined, or he elected you to. Ephesians 1:4, I mentioned, you find it a couple other places, Colossians 1:22. Verse 21, actually, Colossians 1. Look at the difference of what happens when we're saved, "although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond

reproach." What a transition from being enemies of God, hostile to God, under his wrath, engaged in evil deeds, reconciled, and not only reconciled, that doesn't just mean that you now are at peace, he goes beyond that, you're holy and blameless and beyond reproach. So great a salvation. So great a Savior.

And then Jude, I'll just read that to you, 24 and 25. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." A benediction that we use often.

The presence of his glory, blameless. We can stand in the presence of his glory blameless and holy because God has chosen us to that very purpose. He wants to bring sinners into his presence so that there's no hindrance. Can you imagine that, to stand before him with nothing to hide? I mean, how often do we feel like we have something to hide? You know, it's just constant. Even when we're doing our best, there are embarrassing things we'd rather just not know about, you know? It can be as simple as something like, you know, forgetting that it's, well, Father's Day or Mother's Day, or it doesn't matter as much forgetting Father's Day, guys don't care that much, but forgetting, you know, a birthday, or forgetting an anniversary, and then remembering it and then trying to scramble to make sure that you do what needs to happen to show your wife or your husband how much you love him. Generally, it's going to be the guy that's doing this, not the wife. It does happen, though. It's not 100%, but like 95%, it's more the guy than the wife that's needing to scramble. Well, so even when you do and you feel like you've done well, there's that part of your heart that you know, there's so much, failure to love, there's so much failure to be what I should be. We feel like we're always, we know there's just, we wish that there was more purity of devotion. I'm talking about in good godly marriages, where there's so much that's lacking from what it should be, there's always feels like there's something to hide. And then think about coming to God who sees everything and knowing that we come, even as we pray, "Lord, I want to pray and I feel, I confess, even as I come, I don't want to pray as I ought." And knowing he sees that. He's saying he's bringing us to the place one day where we will be before him and there will be none of that.

An analogy is, it's not a worthy analogy, but somewhat helpful, you know, when the joy of going, this time of year especially, you get outside working, you get sweaty and dirty, and you know, grimy, working in the yard and how bad that can feel. Or like going, one of the things about going to the beach that we always talk about is you go to the beach and you have a great time at the beach, but man, when you get home, you're so, just sand and perspiration and when you take that shower, wow, how good that feels to be clean. It's like the best clean feeling, isn't it? That when you've gone through some circumstance like that, it's a tiny inkling of what it will be to be before the eyes of him who sees everything, holy and blameless, clean forever, as he intended you to be, as we long to be. That's what he's saying.

He chose us with a purpose to bring us to himself. That's why it's where. "I want to bring you to Myself, holy and blameless before Me," he's saying. "I want you to know the wonder of Me looking upon you, My children, and seeing no flaw, no defect, nothing but exactly what I wanted you to be." God says that's what is the destiny of every child of God. Is it merely future or is it, does it have a now element too? I think it does have a, it's yes and no. It's the future and it's now. There's a sense in which, as Paul is making this really clear in Ephesians, that positionally, positional truth versus experiential truth, that positionally, this is true of you, if you have repented and placed your faith in Christ, you've been born again, this is true of you now, positionally. When God looks at you, he sees you as if you had never sinned. He not only sees you as if you'd never sin, now think about that, and think about some of the things that you've done that you would rather you could erase from your history and then understand that God is saying that he has erased it, and not only has he erased it, that it's fully removed. As far as the East is from the West, he remembers your sins no more. Not only that, he's not only erased it and brought you back to even, he's replaced it with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, that whatever sin it was that you, the sins that you think about in your past, that if I could, these are the things that just break my heart when I think back on them, now imagine in that moment having done the very best, most perfect thing before God, that's how God sees you now as if you had obeyed perfectly because Jesus Christ did obey perfectly and you have, if you were in Christ, he has exchanged, he took your sins so he could give you his righteousness.

So there's a sense in which positionally this is true of us now, yet experientially it's still not, isn't it? We still see so much in us. So much sin. As I said earlier, even when we pray, we have to keep our minds focused. We have to labor at that. We have to labor at giving attention to the word of God and keeping our mind from wandering and thinking about so many other things or wanting to avoid the Scriptures because our sin nature is resisting that. We have to put that to death on a daily basis through union with Christ. But one day, that process of sanctification is going to be over. In fact, I love how he even deals with this. There's one other place where this holy and blameless comes up, and it's in Ephesians itself. In the New Testament, I'm talking about holy and blameless. Old Testament it's quite often. When he's talking about the husband relationship with the wife, verse 25, Ephesians 5, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word." So Jesus gave himself up for the church to cleanse her and to wash her. Look at verse 27, "that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."

That's what God has purposed from before the foundation of the world to bring you to himself in this idea "before Him." There's a second thing, though, related to where. Back to Ephesians 1. And we see this, actually, in the next verse, "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself," and I want to focus, we're going to talk about predestined in a moment, but I want to, the where is the phrase "to adoption." Where did he predestine us to adoption? He chose us in the same way he chose us to be before him holy and blameless. You see that? He chose us to be in his sight, in his very

sight, holy and blameless in the same way he predestined us to the place of adoption as sons. He took us from being his enemies and he not only makes us his subjects, he makes us his own dear children. That's what he's saying in verse 5, "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself."

Adoption. He brings us into his family. He takes those who were far away and makes them his own. He's going to say the same thing in chapter 2, verse 19. Paul is just so ecstatic with all that God has done for us in Christ. In chapter 2, verse 19, he reminds the Gentiles who used to be far off, he says in 2:19, "so then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household." You've been brought in the family of God. In the verse I mentioned earlier, at the very beginning, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name." God the Father is now your Father in Christ. You have been adopted.

Adoption in the Roman world into which Paul wrote, was something held in high esteem and honor. It should always be that way, but in this particular time in history, it was especially so. In fact, the people that would have been reading this would have known from recent world history of one very famous adoption. I mean, the Romans had a system of a man could adopt a son to be his heir, to take his estate, to take his place, and one of the great famous adoptions of all history is when Julius Caesar adopted Gaius Octavius to be his son and he became the greatest Roman emperor. Caesar Augustus was adopted. And so that was an earth-shaping or a world-shaping moment in civilization that happened in history and the people now just less than a hundred years afterwards, Paul writes this letter around 60 AD, Augustus died around 14 AD, so 45 years he's been dead. Everybody knows that story.

Adoption was something of tremendous honor and esteem and so how much more though? It would be impressive to be adopted by Caesar, but to be adopted by God. This is what he says is true of the believer. He purposed to have you, not just as a subject, not just as one of his people, but he purposed to have you at his family table, in his family room. Think about the wonder of family. And some of us have not had good experiences in family and difficult, heartbreaking experiences, and one of the reasons it's so hurtful when that's the case is because we're made for family. We have a deep need to belong. And so when you can thank God for, you know, a good family, and there's no perfect family, every family's got problems, but you can thank God for good family and, you know, the beauty that that is, to belong. You know, the Lord made it so that a man and woman fall in love, get married, and if they're living correctly, their focus is on God and they're seeking to glorify him, and the joy they have in their relationship with him now is triangulated into this wonderful thing they have now, a fellowship with the Lord together. And the joy that they're supposed to have together, God gives, when a man finds a wife, he finds a good thing. He finds his counterpart, his helper suitable. He's been walking around, this is what we don't realize, we're walking around life and half of us is missing. And of course, men don't even know it, it's like Adam. Adam, he was naming the animals, he's working, he's thinking on his projects, what he's going to do and God said, "It's not good for man to be alone." Adam's like, "I'm fine, I'm fine, I've got so much

work to do, my to-do list is long." And man, how much fun it must have been to do work what he was doing, everything worked. Everything he did was right. So he's busy, but the Lord says, "No, it's not good for man to be alone. I need to make a helper suitable." So he makes a counterpart, the exact complement to him, the completion of him. He brings her to him. When he sees her, he's like, "That's it." The Hebrew even has this kind of emphasis in it, "That's what I need."

The joy of that, the wonder of that, now a companion, a counterpart, we can walk through life together. God made us for relationship, and so a man and a woman come together, and there's this new joy. "Man, how did I make it before I found you?" And then God brings a child into, this is his design, their love then begets a child, and another soul comes to live in this communion of love. The wonder of that, the joy of that, to be a part of a family who loves you. Yeah, we're all imperfect, but still, the wonder of that, to be a part, knowing mom and dad love each other and love me. That is such a glorious thing. He says that's all to show us what, where did that all come from? Is God making it up as he goes along? No, that's the type, the anti-type is the Triune God. He, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one God, have existed eternally in a communion of love, mutual delight, love to be together, love to do everything together, love to work together in perfect harmony and he says, "This is what I've now invited you into." And so when a family works as it ought, as imperfect as we are, even in believing families, how much we have wrong with us, and yet there are moments that are really sweet, aren't they, when there's connection, and we're able to spend time together, and you sense there's just something transcendent about this moment, the love that we have for each other, that's all just a tiny drop in the bucket of what it is to be in the family of God, to know his perfect love and know that he is delighted that you are there.

This is what he's getting at. He is determined to bring you into his home and let you celebrate life with him. And he delights in you. That's where he has brought you if you're in Christ. If you're a Christian, what a great privilege it is to be a follower of Jesus. And if you're not a Christian, why would you resist this kind of love? Surrender today, run to Christ today. He beckons you, "Come unto Me." The Scripture is always, "Come." Don't presume on him though, go today. Today is the day of salvation. Jesus has done everything necessary to take you from being like we all are, conceived in sin, hostile to God, enemies of God, and he's done everything necessary to take all of that away and to replace it with his perfect righteousness so that you are holy and blameless because of Jesus. And you can run into his throne room like a little child running to his dad or his mom, or even like a little child running to granddad and grandma. Another picture of how the joy just keeps growing, doesn't it?

That's where, the where of being chosen by God. Chosen to be where? Before him holy and blamelessness, adopted. Now how? The second point, how? How did this happen? He begins unpacking that in this important word in verse 5, "He predestined us." He predestined us and here again, there's two key phrases that I want us to look at. The first is predestined. So there's two sub points here on number point two, how. A is he predestined us. This verb predestined is actually in the original, a participial form. It's not a main verb. And so this verb actually is a helping verb that helps the main verb chose.

Chose is the main verb. He chose us in him. That's his electing love. He set his love on those who were not looking for him. He chose them. He chose them for himself, predestining or having, technically, having predestined them the translation could say.

Having predestined us to adoption through Jesus Christ to himself, having predestined us. This is an interesting word, the word predestined. It comes from the prefix pro, P-R-O, transliterated from the Greek, plus the word horizo, O-R-I-Z-O is the, O-R-I-Z-O. If you actually translated it correctly, it's H-O-R-I-Z-O. Horizo, that's how you pronounce it. Horizo, our word horizon comes from that. And horizo means to set a boundary, to fix a marker. Just like the horizon is the boundary of what we can see. And the sense is, the reason they chose that word is that you look at the horizon, it remains fixed as you move toward it, there it is. And so this means to set or fix the boundary beforehand. God has predestined us to adoption. How did we get to where we are? It's because he chose us and he predestined us. The way that he made his choosing happen was through predestining us. He fixed all of the details beforehand.

It's interesting how this word is used in the New Testament. You have proorizo and orizo, the verb without the preposition before. Look with me at Acts. There's some several places in Acts I want to look at where this verb is used. It shows us something of what it means, the sovereignty of God and predestining. Acts 2:22, this is Peter's sermon, the preaching of Peter at Pentecost after he has assured them that the men who are preaching, remember the Spirit has fallen upon the apostles and those that are gathered with them, and they're preaching to people in foreign dialects; these men don't know the language but the Holy Spirit enables them to speak the language of all the people that are there and they're hearing the gospel in their native tongue. They're assuming maybe they're drunk, and Peter says, "No, these men are not drunk." This is what God prophesied in Joel in verses 17 to 21. This is what God prophesied in Joel. He's poured out his Spirit on mankind because Jesus, he's going to explain how this happened and he says in verse 22, "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." Predetermined plan is the same word. By the predestining, in a sense. You delivered over by the predestining, the predestination, and foreknowledge of God. This is how it happened. It wasn't just that, you guys did it, he says. The Jews, in the first century, rejected Christ, called for Pilate to kill him, and they used Pilate and the Romans to nail him to a cross, but you did this because it was the predestined plan of God, that his predestination, that is his determining beforehand what happens, his setting boundaries, his ordering everything to happen, is the way he makes his election happen. He pre-orders all the events that come.

His sovereignty is over all. Acts 17 verse 26 has a similar word here. This is Paul's preaching. It helps us understand what this word means, orizo and proorizo. He's preaching it in Athens on Mars Hill to the philosophers and he, in verse 24, begins to tell them about the unknown God that they have an altar to. He says, "I'm going to tell you who this unknown God is. He's the God who's made Himself known." Verse 24, "The

God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation." Having determined their appointed times. That's the concept, again, of preordination. He laid out beforehand, he's saying that everybody, when they're born, they're born to the family they're born in, at the time they're born in, at the place they're born in, because God has predetermined it before time. It's all the outworking of his sovereign decree.

The picture that the Scripture gives of God is a much bigger God than we imagine him to be. One of the problems of our sin nature is that we dumb things down. We think God is like us. Psalm 50 says that actually, "Your problem is you thought I was altogether like you," God says. He's not altogether like us. He is the holy one, the exalted one who dwells in light inaccessible, hid from our eyes. We cannot begin to fathom the unfathomable God and he makes himself known in Scripture, and as he does, of course, he continues to confound our expectations because we have such a low view because of sin. We want to make him manageable. Just like he was preaching to them. They wanted to make God something that they could manipulate. You know, you give him something in the temple to make him do what you want him to do. He dwells in temples and he takes sacrifices. No, the God of the Bible's not like that. He doesn't actually dwell in a temple. The temple is just his footstool. He fills heaven and earth. There's not many gods, there's one God.

So the idea is, and one other place I want to show you this is back to Acts chapter 4, verse 28 and 29. After Peter and John are arrested and beaten, they go back and meet with the disciples, those who are following Jesus, now several thousand, and they have a prayer meeting. In verse 27, "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence." I love that. As the persecution breaks out, they don't pray for protection, they pray for more boldness. But Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, Herod, the Jews, they did whatever God had purposed and predestined to occur.

So he's saying the reason that, how does he make it happen? He chooses us and then he predestines. He sets the boundary. He chose where you would be born. He chose where you would grow up. He chose where you would go to school. Even though, listen, it doesn't negate our own, human responsibility is still here. Human freedom is still here. In fact, this is the theology throughout history, we called this the decrees of God. That is, that whatever comes to pass, comes to pass because God decreed it. It was his will. Yet, this is true so as not to do violence to the will of the individual. That is, everyone does what they choose to do and are accountable for their choices and yet, in the end, we find that all that happened was what God decreed to happen.

So think about that, in the cross. Pilate, he was trying to really get off the hook. His wife had had that dream, you know, we read in all the gospel accounts, "Don't have nothing to do with this man." I think Pilate really wanted to get, he didn't want to put Jesus to death, but he was not courageous enough to do the right thing. He wanted peace more than he wanted that, and so he gave in to the crowd. The crowd wanted to kill Jesus, that they amazingly, just less than a week after they hailed him, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," they laid palm branches down on Sunday and now on Friday they're yelling, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" And somehow their sinful wickedness is cooperating with the deception of the evil one, stirring up the crowd, the Pharisees goading them on to do it. But in the final analysis, they're all doing what they want to do, and yet they're doing more than that, what God wants to be done. His will is being done.

Though he is not in any way the author of evil, not enticing anyone to sin in his purity and his holiness. Marvel at that. This is the wonder of our God. Sovereignly reigning over all, yet doing no wrong ever and willing that people not do the wrong. You see this doctrine way back in the very beginning. First book of the Bible, Genesis 37 to 50, the story of Joseph. In chapter 50 verse 20, "You meant it for evil, God meant it for good." That's what Joseph says to his brothers, "You meant it for evil, God meant it for good. At the same time you were meaning it for evil, God was meaning it for good. God was working, even as you were doing the evil, God was doing something good." How? That's what predestination is. He predetermined everything. He predetermined the first person that would tell you about Christ. He predetermined the various things in your life, the circumstances in your life that led to your heart being open and your heart being good soil. God did all of that.

There's one other phrase here related to how I want to look at quickly, and it is through Jesus Christ. This is B, 2B. "He predestined us to adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself." In the same way he chose us in him, the great means of bringing us from where we were to where we are is Jesus Christ, what Jesus has done. It is his perfect and sinless life, tempted in every way yet without sin, obeying God the Father as a true man, though truly God, yet truly man, living as true man, as without using the prerogatives of deity, living truly as a man, tempted continually every day, every moment throughout his life, always obeying God perfectly, fully from the heart in every way. 100% perfect. That's what he got every single moment of every single day of his entire life, perfect. And then he went to the cross and he bears our sins in his body on the cross. He is treated as if he lived your and my wicked life, and the wrath of God is poured out against our sin on him, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He bears that wrath on the cross, bears what it means to be separated from God. Somehow, wondrously, God turns the back on his Son, and Jesus bears our sins, abandoned by God, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me," until finally he says, "It is finished!" Paid in full. The sin debt is paid in full. He dies. The veil is torn in the temple from top to bottom because the way is now made open into the very presence of God. Through Jesus Christ, that's how we can go from being alien strangers, enemies, to being precious children. That's the glory of what God has done for us in Christ. That's why he said, when Mary Magdalene grabbed him after the resurrection and was holding onto his legs, he says, "Stop clinging to Me for I am ascending. You go and tell My brothers, I'm ascending to My Father and your

Father, to My God and your God." After the cross, after the resurrection, all the work is done. It is finished. Chosen in him.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we thank You for the wonder so great a salvation to be able to stand in Your presence, blameless, holy, with great joy. We marvel at what You've done. For those of us who have come to Christ, Lord, we pray that the reality of who we are now in Jesus, the fact that we are able to stand in Your presence this way, that we would be continually delighting in that reality, that we would be blessing You just as Paul is in this text, that this would be the song of our hearts more and more every day, remembering where we were and now where we are, in Your presence, blameless and holy. Father, for those that have not yet truly placed their faith in Christ, may You bring them to Yourself today. Grant them grace to run to You. Help them. And Father, we pray that as a people, we would be a people who encourage one another every day by the great love that we have and that we, because we've been loved by You like this, may we love one another, brothers and sisters, and may we show the love of our glorious God to a lost and dying world so that more and more might come out of darkness into light, from being enemies to being Your children. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.